DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 470 785 CE 084 087

AUTHOR	Naylor, Michele
TITLE	The Perceived Influence of Industry-Sponsored Credentials in the Information Technology Industry. In Essence: Key Findings from the National Research Center for Career and Technical Education No. 2.
INSTITUTION	National Dissemination Center for Career and Technical Education, Columbus, OH.
SPONS AGENCY	Office of Vocational and Adult Education (ED), Washington, DC.
PUB DATE	2002-00-00
NOTE	3p.
CONTRACT	V051A990004;V051A990006
AVAILABLE FROM	For full text: http://www.nccte.org/publications/infosynthesis/in-essence/in-ess ence2/index.asp.
PUB TYPE	Information Analyses (070)
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Administrator Attitudes; Career Development; *Credentials; Education Work Relationship; *Employee Attitudes; *Employer Attitudes; Employment Patterns; Employment Practices; *Employment Qualifications; *Information Technology; Job Training; National Surveys; Postsecondary Education; Recruitment; *School Business Relationship; Secondary Education; Validity; Vocational Education
IDENTIFIERS	*Career and Technical Education

ABSTRACT

The perceptions of human resource (HR) managers and information technology (IT) professionals regarding the influence of industry-sponsored credentials (ISCs) on recruitment, training, career development, and selected organizational outcomes were examined. Data were collected from 33 (66%) of 50 HR executives surveyed and from a Web-based survey completed by 245 IT employees from 13 organizations employing a total of 13,236 workers. HR executives still considered a traditional 4-year college degree in an IT-related field over an ISC to be the desired credential held by job applicants. Although they credited ISCs with making the recruitment process easier and time efficient, most HR executives believed that ISCs reduce employees' sense of teamwork, camaraderie, and ability to solve problems creatively. More than two-thirds of the IT employees had one or more ISCs, and most believed that ISCs have positive impacts on recruitment, reduce organizations' training costs, reduce the time required for new employees to learn their jobs, and increase new employees' chances for success. However, ISCs appeared to have a negative (albeit not statistically significant) impact on employees' level of organizational commitment. The study findings are potentially of concern for employees and career and technical education teachers--especially those planning to use ISCs as an entry point into the IT industry. (MN)

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In Essence:

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No. 2

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IN ESSENCE
KEY FINDINGS FROM THE NATIONAL RESEARCH CENTER FOR CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION
no. 2 2002

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The Perceived Influence of Industry-Sponsored Credentials in the Information Technology Industry

This publication summarizes findings of research reported in *The Perceived Influence of Industry-Sponsored Credentials in the Information Technology Industry* by Kenneth R. Bartlett. St. Paul: National Research Center for Career and Technical Education, University of Minnesota, 2002. https://www.nccte.org/publications/secure/index.asp#PerceivedInfLuence. It was prepared by Michele Naylor for the National Dissemination Center.

The perceptions of human resource (HR) managers and information technology (IT) professionals regarding the influence of industry-sponsored credentials (ISCs) on recruitment, training, career development, and selected organizational outcomes were examined. A total of 33 HR executives from 50 organizations with large numbers of IT employees returned complete questionnaires, representing a 66% response rate. The responding HR executives represented 1% of the population of 3,336 eligible organizations. A web-based survey was completed by 245 IT employees from 13 organizations employing a total of 13,236 IT workers. The IT workers' response rate could not be calculated.

HR Executive Findings

- Eighty-five percent of the HR executives noted an increase in the number of job applicants with ISCs, with at least half of their IT employees having at least one industry-sponsored credential.
- HR executives preferred a traditional 4-year college degree in an IT-related field over an ISC as the desired credential held by job applicants.
- Nearly 80% of HR executives considered the primary benefit of ISCs to be easier identification of applicants' knowledge, skills, and abilities. They also credited ISCs with helping to make the entire recruitment process easier and more time efficient.
- However, most responding HR executives believed that ISCs reduce employees' sense of teamwork, camaraderie, and ability to solve problems creatively.
- Two-thirds of the HR executives stated that their organizations provide funding for IT certification programs facilitated by outside vendors, and nearly half stated that their organizations require IT employees to maintain their IT-related certification.

IT Employee Findings

- More than two-thirds of the responding IT employees have one or more ISCs.
- Most IT employees believed that ISCs have positive impacts on the cost, ease, and efficiency of the recruitment process; reduce organizations' training costs; reduce the time required for new employees to learn their jobs; and increase new employees' chances for success.
- Only 12.3% of IT employees agreed or strongly agreed that ISCs improve their theoretical understanding of key issues related to the industry.
- Slightly more than half of the IT employees believed that ISCs increase the likelihood of employee turnover.
- Holding an ISC was associated with more positive perceptions of access to training and the positive impacts of credentials on the recruitment process and on employees' chances for career success.
- Although job satisfaction and access to training played a positive role in IT employee's level of organizational commitment, the number of ISCs held had a negative (but not statistically significant) impact on level of organizational commitment.

Implications for Employees and Career and Technical Education (CTE)

Although the study documented the increasing prevalence, acceptance, and positive effects of ISCs, it also revealed evidence of possible negative impacts of ISCs on employees' levels of camaraderie and organizational commitment and on their ability to find creative solutions to problems. These findings are potentially of concern for employees and CTE educators—especially those planning to use ISCs as an entry point into the IT industry.

The work reported herein was supported under the National Dissemination for Career and Technical Education, PR/Award (No. VO51A990004) and /or under the National Research Center for Career and Technical Education, PR/Award (No. VO51A990006) as administered by the Office of Vocational and Adult Education, U.S. Department of Education. However, the contents do not necessarily represent the positions or policies of the Office of Vocational and Adult Education or the U.S. Department of Education, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government.

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